THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Environment & Forests is making efforts to improve the enforcement and compliance mechanism with respect to environmental laws. Institutional strengthening is an important part of this process. A proposal to strengthen the Central Pollution Control Board and to establish an Environment Protection Authority is in a conceptual stage, and is yet to be formalised.

Smuggling of skin and bone of wild animals

†2449. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number and details of cases of smuggling of-skin and bones of wild animals that came to light during the last five years, State-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the total number of lions in our wild life sanctuaries was 40,000 in 1945, which has come down, to just 1600 in 2009;

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to increase their number; and

(d) the details of the policy of Government for protection of other wild animals besides lion, on the verge of extinction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) State-wise details of cases of smuggling of skins and bones of wild animals are not compiled and collated at Central Government level. However, as per the information available with the Regional Offices of Wildlife Crime Control Bureau located at Delhi, Jabalpur, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, total number of violations involving skins and bones of wildlife, which have come to their notice during the last five years are as under:

Year	Eastern Region Kolkata	Central Region, Jabalpur	Western Region, Mumbai	Northern Region, New Delhi	Southern Region, Chennai	Total
2004	10	Nil	7	2	1	20
2005	4	Nil	4	2	Nil	10
2006	2	Nil	6	Nil	Nil	8
2007	3	Nil	23	1	Nil	27
2008	7	Nil	11	Nil	Nil	18
TOTAL :	26	Nil	51	5	1	83

(b) There are no authentic reports indicating that the total number of lions in wildlife sanctuaries were 40,000 in 1945. Presently, lions are found only in Gir forests in Gujarat and as per the estimation carried out in 2005, the total population of lions in Gir forests is 359 ± 10.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) The steps taken by the Government to protect and increase the population of wildlife, *inter alia*, include the following:

1. Threatened species of wildlife, including lions are placed in the Schedules of the Wildlife (Protection), Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection.

2. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended from time to time and made more stringent against wildlife related offences.

3. A network of Protected Areas has been established to conserve wildlife and their habitats including rare animals.

4. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to check illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

5. The State/ UT Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around wildlife rich areas.

6. Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State/UT Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz*, 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tigers and 'Project Elephant' for providing better protection and conservation of wildlife.

7. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', a new component has been added for initiating 'Recovery Programme for critically endangered species and their habitats" during the 11th Five Year plan period.

8. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that regulates international trade, in wildlife and its derivatives.

9. India has bilateral arrangements with China and Nepal on combating wildlife crime.

Decrease in population of tigers

2450.SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether tiger population has been decreasing over the years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is proposed to set up new tiger reserves in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) As per the findings of the recent All India tiger estimation in 2008 using the refined methodology, the total country-level population of tiger is 1411 (mid value); the